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Director of Public Works/Town Engineer

February 24, 2022

Testimony In Support of

S.B. No. 115 AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSUMER PACKAGING

H.B. No. 5139 AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR TIRES

H.B. No. 5142 AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CERTAIN GAS CYLINDERS

Senator Cohen and Representative Gresko, distinguished vice chairs, ranking members and esteemed rank & file members of the CGA Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my support for Senate Bill 115 – AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSUMER PACKAGING, House Bill 5139, AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR TIRES and House Bill 5142 AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CERTAIN GAS CYLINDERS. As the Recycling Coordinator for the Town of Mansfield, I serve a community of around 26,000 residents. We have successful EPR programs already in Connecticut – electronics, thermostats, paint and mattresses. They have relieved municipalities of the cost of handling these difficult and/or hazardous items.

CONSUMER PACKAGING – Senate Bill 115

The Connecticut Coalition of Sustainable Material Management group, led by DEEP and representing over 80 municipalities, established packaging extended producer responsibility as one of its goals to reduce waste. The Mansfield Town Council in 2020 passed a Break Free from Plastic Pollution Resolution in support of the goals of packaging EPR. The goals being reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve energy and reduce pollution associated with the life of packaging. These goals can be achieved by creating long lasting packaging that can be reused and refilled, designing packaging for ease of recycling and eliminating single-use plastics which are clogging our oceans. Those of us involved in trash and recycling handling recognize that we are at a crossroads. With the MIRA waste-to-energy facility slated to close in a few months, the pressure on the remaining in-state facilities will grow forcing more out-of-state landfilling. Although the Mid-Northeast Recycling Operating Committee (Mid-NEROC), of which Mansfield is one of its member towns, has not experienced as steep an increase in tipping fees for trash and recyclables over the past few years compared to the rest of the State, that most likely will change when the region goes out to bid this year. I expect sticker shock. We need to reduce waste, and municipalities need relief from spiraling waste costs that we have little control over. Senate Bill 115 is part of the solution to reducing packaging waste and putting the cost of waste management in the hands of those who create it.

Tires - House Bill 5139

In the southern end of the Town of Mansfield there is a tire dump site along the Willimantic River, pictured below, which has yet to be cleaned up. In cooperation with CT DEEP, it is currently being litigated. Not only is this an unsightly mess, these tires serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Tire-derived toxins leaching into the soil and river and the expense of tire disposal make this a costly clean-up. EPR for tires in Canada has proven to have a positive impact on illegal dumping, whereas taxed programs have not. A recently published report from Environment and Human Health, Inc entitled "Plastics and Microplastics: A Threat to

the Environment and Health” cites studies showing that tires contribute to microplastics in our water systems.



Propane Cylinders - House Bill 5142

Although we have an outlet for 20 pound propane cylinders, most of the municipalities in Connecticut do not. The one pound cylinders are taken by our scrap dealers because they want our business. But for them handling cylinders is dangerous and they would like nothing better than to have them out of the scrap metal stream. They are known to explode if they are not punctured and de-valved. If they end up in the trash they can explode in a compacting trash truck.

I and my municipal colleagues applaud the Environment Committee’s introduction of these bills and support your effort in moving the burden of packaging, tires and propane cylinders from municipalities to the manufacturers.

Sincerely,

Virginia Walton

Mansfield Recycling Coordinator